

Smith Bly House  
4 North Maple Street  
Ashville  
Chautauqua County  
New York

HABS No. NY-5462

HABS  
NY,  
7-ASHV,  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NY-5462

## SMITH BLY HOUSE

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NY,  
7-ASHV,  
2-

Location: 4 North Maple Street, Ashville, Chautauqua County,  
New York

Present Owner  
and Occupant: Miss Genevieve E. Fancher

Present Use: Residence

Statement of  
Significance: This provincial example of the Greek Revival style  
illustrates the carpenter-builder's personal inter-  
pretation of order and function of ornament. The  
similarity between the decorative treatment of this  
residence and that of houses in western Pennsylvania  
indicates the proximity of Ashville to the Pennsyl-  
vania state border.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: c. 1835
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners:
  - 1835 Smith Bly
  - c. 1854 T. (Treon?) S. Bly, appeared as owner as per 1854  
map of Chautauqua County.
  - 1863 Deed. County Clerk's Office, Mayville, New York  
From: Treon Bly  
To: Maryette Bly Matteson
  - 1880 Capt. A. C. Robertson
  - 1911-1949 Clyde Weld
  - 1949 Howard Eggers

Most of the above information is from Darrow, Floyd L.,  
The History of the Town of North Harmony, p. 106.

4. Builder or contractor: Unknown. It is noted in The  
History of the Town of North Harmony, p. 106, that the  
house was built at a cost of \$7,000. "The woodwork  
was handcarved by workmen from Philadelphia . . . "
5. Original plans: None known

6. Alterations and additions: No significant changes have been made.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Capt. A. C. Rolertson, one of the owners, was an officer in the Ninth Cavalry during the Civil War.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: None known

2. Bibliography:

- a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Letters, Genevieve Fancher to Jewel H. Conover, Sept., 1963, and Jan., 1965.

- b. Secondary and published sources:

Chautauqua County Map. 1854

Darrow, Floyd L. The History of the Town of North Harmony. Part I. North Harmony, N. Y.: Town Board, 1953.

Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Chautauqua. New York: F. W. Beers & Co., 1881, p. 115.

Starr, Sylvia and Wertz. "Architecture that Came from Athens," House and Garden Magazine, July, 1933.

Prepared by Jewel H. Conover  
Jan. 12, 1965

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This fine example of Greek Revival architecture represents the builder's reliance on plates of the architectural orders found in books by Minard Lefever and others.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Two-story main block, 26' x 40', three bays; one-story wing, approx. 26' x 40', three bays.

2. Foundations: All except the fieldstone of the porch are of dressed stone.
3. Wall construction: The west facades of the main block and wing are finished with flush weatherboards; each facade is divided and framed by elaborately fluted Ionic pilasters. The remainder is clapboarded. The entire structure is painted white.
4. Structural system: Structure is framed in wood.
5. Porches, stoops, and bulkheads: The main entrance is reached by a three-step stair of dressed stone. The side entrance has a modern wooden, four-step stair with handrailing. The wing is fronted on the west by a porch with four Ionic columns similar to those of the recessed main entrance.
6. Chimneys: One brick chimney with rebuilt top is located in the main block.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The recessed main entrance door, a single panel with two adjoining rows of egg-and-dart molding, is flanked by narrow sidelights with wood muntins. The transom with carved consoles is obscured by screening. A wooden lintel with a carved, running motif of stylized acanthus leaves is supported by two Ionic columns. The center entrance door of the wing, a single panel with one row of egg-and-dart molding, is topped by a slightly arched lintel containing a carved, stylized, foliate design. The doorway is flanked by fluted Ionic pilasters. The wing side-entrance four-panel door - apparently original - has a pane of glass, which has replaced the upper two panels. The wing rear-entrance door has four solid panels.
  - b. Windows and shutters: All windows on the first floor have slightly eared and arched lintels containing a carved, stylized, foliate design. The three double-hung first-floor windows in the main block contain nine-over-six-light sashes. All other double-hung windows have six-over-six-light sashes. Exterior louvered shutters have been removed except on the first-floor south window of the main block.
8. Roof: The low hipped roofs are covered by asphalt shingles. There is a full entablature around the main block with maximum projection of 6"-8". The wing has a cornice and fascia.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: First floor: The entrance hall in the main block contains the stairway and entrance to the northwest parlor and rear parlor. The rear parlor in the main block is connected to the front room of the wing by sliding doors. A wood shed is located in the rear of the wing.
2. Stairways: A single-run, open-string stairway with turned and tapered balusters is located on the southeast wall of the entrance hall. It is finished with sawn brackets, a turned newel post, and an oval handrail.
3. Flooring: Wide pine boards, some with wooden pegs.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All plaster, with modern paint and paper.
5. Doorways and doors: Double, four-panel sliding doors between the front and rear parlor of the main block and the rear parlor and room of the wing are framed by slightly eared, double-arched lintels and wide flat casings.
6. Special decorative features: The northwest parlor contains a flat, circular ceiling ornament.
7. Hardware: An old keyhole plate is located in the door jamb of the main entrance.
8. Lighting: Modern electric.
9. Heating: Rear parlor in main block has what appears to be a closed fireplace with simple wooden mantel and surround. This may have been a false opening, as the chimney in the room to the rear is only large enough for a flue, but not a fire box.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces west toward a village street which has other houses of similar character.
2. Historic landscape design: A stone curb, flush with the grass, remains along the north side of the house. It was apparently the base of an iron fence.
3. Outbuildings: None remain. An old barn was destroyed in 1963.

Prepared by Olaf W. Shelgren, Jr.  
Architect  
October 21, 1964

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This photo-data book was prepared as part of a 1964-65 recording project in cooperation with the Buffalo-Western New York Chapter of AIA, Olaf William Shelgren (at that time Chairman of the Chapter's Preservation Committee), and Olaf William Shelgren, Jr.--both, of the firm Shelgren, Patterson and Marzec. Photographs were taken in May, 1965, by Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer. Under the direction of John C. Poppeliers, Chief, HABS, an editorial project was undertaken in September, 1973, by Susan R. Slade, architectural historian.